BRULE RIVER STATE FOREST MASTER PLAN
FACT SHEET

Wisconsin's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality

on the

Brule River State Forest

Wisconsin's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality (BMPs) are guidelines to help loggers, landowners and natural resource managers minimize nonpoint source pollution during forestry operations. Wisconsin's BMP program began in 1995 with the publication of the BMP Field Manual. This manual was developed by an diverse team made up of representatives from county, state, and federal government agencies, University of Wisconsin Extension, logging and paper manufacturing companies, and environmental, conservation, and recreational organizations. The BMPs are mandatory on all DNR properties, including state forests and parks.

On the Brule River State Forest (BRSF), the BMPs are regarded as the minimum level of water quality protection. Most of our timber sales are designed away from the river and streams for aesthetic reasons and exceed BMP recommendations. DNR forestry personnel who oversee timber sale operations have been trained in BMP application.

Most of the BMPs deal with timber harvesting, but activities such as prescribed burning, mechanical site preparation, tree planting and chemical use are also covered. The primary timber harvesting BMPs include:

- Planning (time of year, minimizing impacts, permits, endangered resources, etc.).
- Planning, location and design of roads.
- Road construction and drainage structures.
- Soil stabilization and road maintenance.
- Fuels, lubricants, wastes and spills.

Wisconsin's BMP program includes an ongoing monitoring effort. From 1995 to 1997, we conducted statewide monitoring. In 1999-2000, we focused our monitoring in the southwest part of Wisconsin. The next statewide monitoring effort will be in 2001 or 2002.

Between 1995 and 1997, the DNR, with the help of many outside partners, monitored 295 timber sales across the state. These timber sales, which were located on a wetland or within 200 feet of a lake or stream, represented six distinct groups of landowners: state, federal, county, private

industrial, private non-industrial and tribal. The number of sales monitored for each landowner group was weighted towards the amount of timber harvested by each landowner group. This means that during those three years, we monitored 13 state-owned sales, 17 federally-owned sales, 51 county-owned sales, 24 private industrial sales, 168 private non-industrial sales, and six tribal sales. Although these sales were randomly selected, they were all checked ahead of time to verify that they were either on a wetland or within 200 feet of a lake or stream. A total of 2,325 randomly selected sales were checked to come up with the 295 sales that qualified.

Highlights from the 1995-1997 statewide monitoring effort include:

- BMPs were correctly applied 85% of the time where needed for timber sales on a wetland or within 200 feet of a lake or stream.
- When BMPs were applied where needed, 99% of the time monitoring teams observed no adverse impact to water quality.
- When BMPs were not applied where needed, 38% of the time monitoring teams observed no adverse impact to water quality, 57% of the time a minor impact rating was recorded, and 5% of the time a major impact rating was recorded.

Due to the relatively small amount of timber harvested on state lands and because timber sales on the Brule River State Forest are not within 200 ft of lakes or streams, no timber sales on the BRSF were selected for monitoring during 1995-1997.

The monitoring teams were comprised of people with a broad range of interests and expertise. Team members were from county, state and federal agencies; professional forestry organizations; environmental and conservation organizations; and the timber, pulp and paper industry. Each monitoring team had six people with expertise in the following areas: forest management, logging, road development, soils, water quality, and a representative from an environmental or conservation organization. In addition, each team was led by a forester from either the DNR or the U.S. Forest Service.